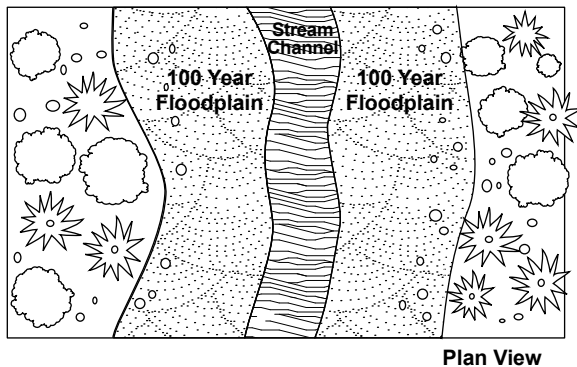
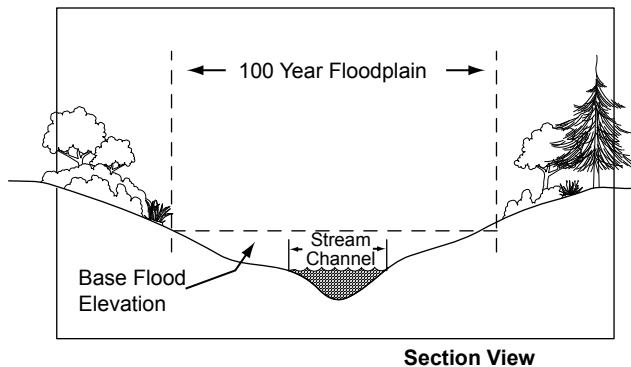


What is an Area of Special Flood Hazard?

This is land within a floodplain that has a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year as calculated in the Storm and surface Water Utility Code, Chapter 24.06 BCC. It is sometimes referred to as the “100-year” floodplain. Development in Areas of Special Flood Hazard in Bellevue is regulated by LUC 20.25H – Critical Area Overlay District.



Why are Areas of Special Flood Hazard Protected?

Flood hazard areas naturally lie adjacent to water bodies such as streams, lakes, or their associated wetlands. Those water bodies, by themselves, cannot always store runoff from a severe storm. The excess water overflows stream banks, lake edges, and other boundaries, and inundates surrounding land.

Allowing development within these areas would result in two primary negative impacts. First, it would reduce the flood storage capacity of the naturally-flooding area, forcing the floodwaters

to seek out substitute storage area downstream. Second, it would place new development directly in the natural path of floodwaters, causing damage to those new improvements. By acknowledging and anticipating natural flooding events, flooding can be accommodating while minimizing risk to property improvements.

Are all Areas of Special Flood Hazard Protected?

Yes. The City designates all Areas of Special Flood Hazard as Critical Areas.

How can an Area of Special Flood Hazard affect my property?

An Area of Special Flood Hazard can affect structure location, allowable lot coverage, permitted uses or activities, and development density or intensity. In general, because these are Critical Areas, with the exception of specific uses, disturbance and development is prohibited in the critical area.

How is use of my property affected?

In general, no new development is permitted within an Area of Special Flood Hazard, and is restricted to those identified in LUC 20.25H. Those uses which may be permitted are typically of a nature which produce minor impact or are a public necessity. Uses on the portion of your property lying outside of the Area of Special Flood Hazard can be established in accordance with the underlying land use district, subject to the provisions of LUC 20.25H. Expansion of existing development can be allowed, subject to specific performance standards review through a Critical Areas Land Use permit.

Are buffers or setbacks required from Areas of Special Flood Hazard?

No. However, the Area of Special Flood Hazard may lie next to another Critical Area, such as a wetland, stream corridor, shoreline or steep slope, which has a required buffer or structure setback that extends beyond the Area of Special Flood Hazard.

How does an Area of Special Flood Hazard affect lot coverage?

The amount of lot coverage allowed for different uses in LUC 20.20.010 is based on site area after all Critical Areas, including stream buffers, are subtracted from the total site area. So, if you are allowed 35% lot coverage, but 2,000 sq. ft. of your 10,000 sq. ft. lot contains Critical Areas, your lot coverage is 2,835 sq. ft. ($10,000 - 2,000 = 8,000 \times .35 = 2,835$).

How will an Area of Special Flood Hazard affect development density?

This can vary depending on the type of development proposed. Contact a Land Use Planner for additional information.

Is development in an Area of Special Flood Hazard subject to any special standards?

Yes. LUC 20.25H establishes performance standards that apply to all development in Areas of Special Flood Hazard. These standards are intended to protect on-site and off-site improvements from dangers associated with flooding, and to preserve and protect the natural environment.

The standards address review requirements, structure intrusions, general construction standards, residential construction, nonresidential construction, roads and utilities, subdivisions and other proposed new developments, and agricultural uses. If you are contemplating development within an Area of Special Flood Hazard, you should become familiar with these performance standards.

What if improvements on my property are already in an Area of Special Flood Hazard?

All development within the Area of Special Flood Hazard which existed or was vested prior to August 1, 2006 is considered to legally conform with the requirements of LUC 20.25H. If a change is proposed to the existing development, that change must satisfy the performance standards of LUC 20.25H.

How do I know if an Area of Special Flood Hazard exists?

These areas are identified in a report entitled "Flood Insurance Study – City of Bellevue, Washington" dated June 1978 and revised March 23, 1982, and are shown in the City of Bellevue Sensitive Area Notebook. Contact a Land Use Planner or the Floodplain Manager in the Utilities Department for more information.

How do I know where the flood elevation is on my property?

This will require a review of the City's Flood Insurance Study, as well as a property survey to accurately locate the flood elevation. A Floodplain Elevation Certificate is required for any development within the Area of Special Flood Hazard. Speak with a Land Use Planner or Flood Plain Manager for more information about these Certificates.

Is the City the only agency that gets involved?

No. Sometimes State or Federal approvals or permits are required as well. A Land Use representative at the Permit Center or Flood Plain Manager in the Utilities Department can help you identify other required approvals for your project.

Where can I get additional information?

- Handout #___ - Flood Elevation Certificates
- Handout #___ - Critical (Critical) Areas
- Handout #___ - Critical Wetlands
- Handout #___ - Critical Slopes
- Handout #___ - Critical Riparian Corridors
- City of Bellevue Sensitive Areas Notebook
- City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan
- City of Bellevue Land Use Code, Part 20.25H
- City of Bellevue Clearing and Grading Code (BCC 23.76)
- City of Bellevue Development Standards, Chapters 2 and 4

This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or for other city codes, such as the Construction Codes. Additional information is available from Development Services at Bellevue City Hall or on the city website at www.bellevuewa.gov.

For land use regulations that may apply to your project, contact the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services. Phone: 425-452-4188. E-mail: landusereview@ci.bellevue.wa.us. Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711.
